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Relatively little attention has been given to the use of magazines in the classroom, in contrast to the amount of attention given to the use of newspapers, for example. Yet, the number of magazines continues to increase in the United States, and surveys indicate that high school students read many of them. The surveys also indicate that there is a low correlation between magazines read by students and magazines found in high schools. Such a situation need not exist if an imaginative teacher utilizes the students' reading interests to meet their reading needs through magazines in the classroom. Periodicals can be used to individualize instruction and to give attention to nearly all facets of reading. References are included. (MD)

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ABSTRACT

Meeting Today's Reading Needs
Through Magazines in the Classroom

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It is surprising that relatively little attention has been given to using magazines in the classroom in contrast, for example, to the amount of attention given to using newspapers in the classroom. For the number of magazines continues to increase in the United States, and surveys indicate that high school students read many of these magazines.

These surveys also indicate, however, that there is a low correlation between magazines read by students and those found in the high school.

With magazines the teacher can individualize instruction. He can give attention to nearly all facets of reading. The degree of courage and imagination on the part of the teacher will determine the extent to which today's reading needs are met through magazines in the classroom.

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MEETING TODAY'S READING NEEDS THROUGH MAGAZINES IN THE CLASSROOM

Allen Berger
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It is surprising that relatively little attention has been given to using magazines in the classroom in contrast, for example, to the amount of attention given to using newspapers in the classroom. For the number of magazines is increasing in the United States. In 1968, 94 new magazines began publication, "with nine others merged or sold, and only a dozen...going out of business." The health of magazine publishing is further reflected in a "3.2 per cent jump in revenues to an impressive $1.09 billion for the top fifty magazines during the first eleven months. Circulation, too, had been up 3.3 per cent during the first six months of 1968." (1)

And it is encouraging to know that these magazines are being read, according to the survey of 158 leading high schools by Former NCTE Executive-Secretary James R. Squire and Roger K. Applebee of the University of Illinois (2). The students were asked to

indicate the magazines that they read regularly, and the findings suggested "not only the insatiable interests of the teenagers in the study, but also the absence of any close correlation between magazines available in school libraries and those regularly read by students." The latter finding is of course unfortunate and Squire and Applebee comment:

> "The one magazine found in almost all of the libraries, Saturday Review, ranks only twenty-seventh among the preferences of adolescents. Post, Life, Newsweek, Atlantic Monthly, and Harper's are available in nearly equal numbers, but, although the first three rate high among student choices, the others were mentioned by less than 1 percent of the students reporting. Perhaps of more importance, however, are the number of popular and highly regarded magazines which many school libraries do not receive. Seventeen, ranked fifth by students, is missing from 20 percent of the libraries; Look, ranked fourth, from even more. Hot Rod, Sports, and Ingenue, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth in student popularity, are missing from over half of the collections, the last two from three-fourths or more."

Squire and Applebee cite the need to have in the school

library periodicals as Hi-Fi, Western Horseman, Electronics, Road and Track, "and perhaps with some student populations Surf Guide."

Fortunately not all school libraries have a dismal selection of magazines. During the summer of 1963 I taught reading in Irondequoit (N.Y.) High School, just outside of Rochester. The library contained an array of reading matter. An article describing that particular library is in The Reading Teacher (3). (The theme of that issue of The Reading Teacher, incidentally, is Reading Instruction and School Libraries.)

The periodicals most frequently used in regular English classrooms, according to the Squire-Applebee survey, are Atlantic Monthly (32.7 percent), Reader's Digest (32.5 percent), Harper's (25.8 percent) and Practical English (24.3 percent). Squire and Applebee comment:

> "While teachers wisely spend little time 'teaching' Life, Look, and other popular journals, they may spend too much time as it is on the Reader's Digest, considering that it is already the sixth most frequently read magazine. But it does seem discouraging that class time spent on more thoughtful periodicals like Harper's and Atlantic Monthly seems to have had little effect on reading preferences. Actually, Mad magazine accounted for

forty more readers than either of the two last named periodicals."

The Squire-Applebee findings are in line with the findings of earlier studies of teenage reading interests (4,5).

Other thoughts on using magazines to improve reading can be found in Frederick S. Kiley's "The Magazine in the Classroom," Margaret R. Norton's "Pamphlets and Magazines Stimulate Social Studies," and Charles M. Garverick's "Teacher Use of Educational Psychology Journals." Kiley (6) suggests ways that the selection of pictures reflect the subtle use of propaganda and also gives examples of deifying mediocrity. Norton (7) indicates how magazines may stimulate interest in social studies and lists some fifty periodicals for the social studies classroom. Garverick (8) discusses the results he obtained when he asked teachers at the beginning and at the end of a course to list professional journals that they would recommend to their fellow teachers.

The first issue of the Indiana Reading Quarterly contains an article on "Newspapers and Magazines as Sources for Teaching Reading Techniques" (9). And Hooked on Books (10) contains a section on hooking youngsters onto magazines.

Using magazines to improve writing is discussed by Finder (11). Additional thoughts on using magazines in the classroom are found in Squire's "Reading in American High Schools Today" (12) and by DeBoer and others in a chapter on mass media (13). A magazine unit is described in the curriculum guide put out by the Department of Education of the Province of Alberta (14), and two comprehensive annotated lists

of magazines published in America and Canada appropriate for varying grade levels have also been compiled by the Province of Alberta (15).

To obtain magazines, I once sent a letter to more than one hundred magazines listed in an issue of The Writer (16). The letter simply requested any back issue of the magazine that might be available for use in the classroom. Not only did I receive expressions of willingness to cooperate from nearly every magazine but I also received recent issues of over a hundred different magazines for my students.

In beginning a discussion on magazines, I have found that the following procedure seems to be effective with most students. Usually I draw from the students the fact that one form of literature that America gave to the world was the short story. We discuss some of the influences that led to the development of the short story, including Edgar Allan Poe and the great variety of magazines in the United States. Even today, the students are reminded, there are hundreds of magazines available at any large newsstand in America.

Continuing as much as possible inductively, I ask for names of magazines, writing each name on the blackboard in one of four columns. Five minutes later the blackboard resembles the following:

Life	Popular Science	Harper's	comics
Look	Popular Mechanics	Atlantic	True Confession
Reader's Digest	Field and Stream	~~Monthly~~	
Good Housekeeping	Ingenue		
Better Homes & Gardens	Negro Digest		
McCalls	Ebony		
Seventeen			
Esquire			
Playboy			

Continuing inductively, we discuss what the magazines in each category have in common so that we can obtain a heading for each column. The students indicate that the magazines in the first column are widely circulated whereas those in the second column are aimed more at a smaller group of people. High school students do not usually come up with many magazines for the third column, so additional names might be added: The New Yorker, Commentary, Paris Review, Partisan Review, Chelsea, Trace, Prairie Schooner, Transatlantic Review, The Antioch Review, The Massachusetts Review.

Gradually the students may come up with column headings such as slick (wide circulation and usually printed on shiny paper), technical (aimed at a certain group of people), quality (as the name implies), and pulp (certain magazines printed on pulpy paper). The students should realize that these categories are arbitrary and that other categories could have been made. Many will also realize that some magazines can be placed in more than one column. The intent of the columns, or categories, they should understand, is primarily for ease of discussion.

Further discussion might revolve around whether a slick magazine or a quality magazine would pay more for a story or article. Usually the first response is the quality pays more, but when the students are forced to defend that answer they realize that the slicks would pay more because they are more widely circulated so they have more ads and can afford to pay more for a story. Some slicks, the students might be told, pay a minimum of $1,000 for a story or article,

whereas quality magazines would pay about half that amount and some might pay only in copies of the magazine. Discussion might also revolve around whether or not the articles or stories that appear in magazines like True Confessions are really true. (I know a woman who presses clothes in a dry cleaning establishment who, from time to time, imagines provocative stories and writes and sells these to pulp magazines several times each year.)

For an assignment, which the students can begin in class, the teacher might distribute available magazines with the following request:

> Examine at least one magazine and be prepared to comment upon (a) the kind of magazine that you received--that is, slick, technical, quality, pulp; (b) the audience at which the magazine is aimed--that is, young, old, men, women, teens, children, poor, wealthy; (c) the make-up of the magazine--that is, articles, stories, poems, etc.; (d) the advertisements--for people with or without money; (e) any connection that might exist between the ads and the articles, stories, or poems selected to appear in the magazine.

From here the teacher and students may move in a variety of directions depending upon the interests and make-up of the class. The teacher may wish to individualize instruction by giving certain magazines to certain students. Regarding readability, for instance, Robert Gunning, author of the Fog Index, observes that "pulp

magazines (True Confessions and Modern Romances are typical) required sixth to seventh-grade reading skill. Women's magazines, such as Ladies' Home Journal or McCall's, 10; Reader's Digest, 10; Time and Newsweek regularly average 11. Issues of Harper's and The Atlantic average no higher than 11 or 12." (17) Gunning includes a readability meter to indicate the percentage of adults who can read at each level. The Fog Index, incidentally, and other readability formulas, is described in Klare's The Measurement of Readability (18).

And, depending upon the class, the teacher may wish to initiate critical reading through advertisements with a discussion of propaganda techniques (e.g., testimonial, namecalling, bandwagon, transfer, cardstacking, plain folks, glittering generalities). From there attention may be given to editorials and other writing.

Some students may wish to do some research on topics like censorship. They can bring in their findings and discuss them with the whole class. Louise M. Rosenblatt (19) in her brilliant Literature as Exploration makes the following observation: "The criterion for discriminating between helpful and harmful kinds of escape is that escape through literature should not leave the reader less able than before to cope with reality." The students may wish to discuss the implications of this observation.

Some of the more capable students may wish to help those students who need some reading help. Using magazines on appropriate levels, training can be given in main ideas (through titles of articles), in details (reading and recalling what was read),

inferences, etc. Many popular coed magazines contain recipes which, for successful fruition, require the skill of following directions.

Many out of print magazines, or back issues, are now available on microfilm (20). Some titles include Harper's Weekly (1857 - 1900), The Nation (1899-1923), Niles' National Register (1811 - 1849), and Time (1923 - 1967). Others available on microfilm include Literary Digest, Manchester Guardian Weekly, Middle East Journal, Negro History Bulletin, and the Saturday Evening Post.

Students with a flair for creative writing may be interested in knowing that, each year, nearly all of the stories selected to appear in The Best American Short Stories originally appeared in small, relatively unknown, quality magazines (21).

Depending upon the time and inclination of the students, attention may be given to the writing of magazine articles and stories, for it is likely that one is better able to read an article or story if he has gone through the process of trying to write one. Regarding articles, the students can be informed that those appearing in the slicks and technical magazines usually have an anecdotal style or lead. For example, an article about the connection between the cost of a school building and the quality of education inside may be developed by citing a $10,000 school in Florida and a $15,000 school in Texas, and a $20,000 school in New York and so on until the author draws his conclusion. By being aware of this particular style of writing students can read the article more rapidly and effectively. They would have to slow down for a similar article appearing in a quality magazine, for the writer might give a thorough

presentation of both sides of the question and then draw his conclusion.

In short, there are many ways of meeting today's reading needs through magazines in the classroom, and the degree of courage and imagination on the part of each teacher will determine the extent to which these ways are provided for the students.

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